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## **Senegal: Colonialism, the State and Society**

AFRS 3000 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:  
**Senegal: Global Security and Religious Pluralism**

**PLEASE NOTE:** This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

### **Course Description**

This seminar introduces students to Senegalese society and critically examines the forces that are shaping its evolution through two broad questions: What are the historical foundations of contemporary Senegalese society and state? How has Senegal's encounter with the world affected the socio-political particularities of its contemporary cultures? We will first trace the historical evolution of the Senegalese state from the so called "medieval empires" to the present with a strong focus on its political, social, and economic realities. We will subsequently explore the major shifts in Senegalese identities via changing meanings of class and socio-political roles. We will then draw upon students' engagement with Senegalese life to explore the emerging cultural forms in Senegalese peoples' understandings of their presents and their futures. The seminar is taught largely as a field-based course. Site visits, field trips, and excursions to various urban and rural locations provide the empirical data and insights with which students engage and analyze key research questions. Readings and videos are deliberately assigned to provoke discussion and critical reflection.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the political history of Senegal;
- Illustrate how colonialism shaped nationalism and the state apparatus in Senegal;
- Explain the processes that are shaping contemporary Senegalese society; and
- Understand the changing cultural forms in Senegal.

### **Language of Instruction**

This course is taught primarily in English and all assigned readings are in English.

### **Required Books**

Niane, D. T. (2006). *Sunjata, an Epic of Old Mali*. Harlow, U.K.: Pearson Longman.

Kourouma, A. (1981). *The Suns of Independence*. New York: Africana Pub.

Diome, F. (2006). *The Belly of the Atlantic*. London: Serpent's Tail.

#### **Recommended Books**

Gellar, S. (1995). *Senegal: An African nation between Islam and the West* (2<sup>nd</sup>. Ed). Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Ba, M. (2012). *So Long a Letter*. Illinois: Waveland Press

#### **Module I: Colonization, Coloniality, and the Re-conceptualization of the Nation-State**

This module reviews the political economy of colonialism and the epistemic foundations of coloniality to show how they shaped and continue to drive the Senegalese state apparatus and Senegalese cultures. We will explore the ways the political economy of colonialism and the philosophical precepts of coloniality interact with indigenous political structures and practices to shape Senegalese social orders.

##### **Session 1: Politics, Culture, and Life Before Berlin**

This session introduces students to the history of Senegal before the Berlin Conference. It highlights the political history of Senegal that precedes the imposition of formal colonialism, laying emphasis on the dynamic interchange of people, goods, and cultures across the Atlantic and across the Sahara.

##### **Required Readings:**

Niane, D. T. (2006). *Sunjata, an Epic of Old Mali*. Harlow, U.K: Pearson Longman.

##### **Recommended Readings:**

Rodney, W. (1970). *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800* (pp. 1-38). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gellar, S. (1995). *Senegal: An African Nation between Islam and the West* (2nd ed., pp. 1-8). Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

##### **Session 2: Senegal from 1885 to 1960**

This session introduces the history of Senegal under colonial rule, focusing on the processes of border making in the construction of modern Senegal and the violence of the colonial conquest. Particular attention will be reserved to the development of the contemporary Senegalese culture, its religious pluralism, and its cultural hybridity.

##### **Required Readings:**

Film, *Soleils*, Dani Kouyaté

##### **Recommended Readings:**

Katzenellenbogen, S. (1996). It Didn't Happen at Berlin: Politics, Economics and Ignorance in the Setting of Africa's Colonial Boundaries. In P. Nugent & A. I. Asiwaju (Eds.), *African boundaries: barriers, conduits, and opportunities* (pp. 21–34). London; New York: Pinter.

Gellar, S. (1995). *Senegal: An African Nation Between Islam and the West* (2nd ed., pp. 8-19). Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

## **Module 2: From the Independence Movements to the Post-independence Moments**

This session introduces students to the history of Senegal since independence. A particular attention will be reserved to renegotiations of social orders, the corruption of the elites, and the emergence of a strong feminist tradition.

### **Session 1: The Suns of Independence**

This session focuses on the development of the postcolonial state on the continent and in Senegal through an exploration of the corruption of the elite, the ambiguity of the state and the development of new social relations.

#### **Required Readings:**

Kourouma, A. (1981). *The Suns of Independence*. New York: Africana Pub.

#### **Recommended Readings:**

Ndiaye, M. (1996). *L'éthique Ceddo et la société de l'accaparement ou les conduits culturelles des Sénégalais d'aujourd'hui*. Paris: Hamattan.

## **Session 2: Gender, Patriarchy, and the Invention of Women in Africa**

This session explores the postcolonial manifestations of patriarchy from a decolonial perspective. We will see how, despite the general understanding of African societies as essentially patriarchal, women's place and role in many African societies have eroded during the colonial era.

#### **Required Readings:**

Oyewumi, O. (1997). *The Invention of Women: making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press. (Chapter 1 and chapter 5)

Film, *Madame Brouette*. Moussa Sène Absa.

#### **Recommended Readings:**

Ba M. (2012). *So Long a Letter*. Illinois: Waveland Press

Augis, E. (2009). Jambaar or Jumbax-out? How Sunnite Women Negotiate Power and Belief in Orthodox Islamic Femininity. In M. Diouf & M. A. Leichtman (Eds.), *New Perspectives on Islam in Senegal: Conversion, Migration, Wealth, Power, and Femininity* (pp. 211–233). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

## **Session 3: Immerging Voices: Challenging White-Supremacy-Capitalism-Patriarchy**

This session examines through an intersectional lens the ways African women in general, and Senegalese women, in particular, challenge the interlocking forces of white supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy through their resilience, entrepreneurial ethics, and innovative drives.

#### **Required Readings:**

Film, *Moolaade*, Ousmane Sembene.

#### **Recommended Readings:**

Nkiru Nzegwu. (2006) *Family Matters: Feminist Concepts in African Philosophy of Culture*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press

### **Module 3: Social Transformation in Senegal Today**

To fully grasp shifts in contemporary Senegalese society one must situate it within the network of trade relations and cultural exchange within which Senegalese society is presently embedded. The module draws comparatively upon Senegal's engagement in the global world to explore shifts in formalization and informalization, consumption, technology, communication and social transformation.

#### **Session 1: The Post-colonial Era and the Changing Face of Senegal**

This session examines contemporary developments in Senegalese societies with a focus on the causes and consequences of the idea and realities of globalization in Senegal and West Africa. Particular attention will be reserved to the early colonial causes of globalization and the contemporary epistemic, social, and economic effects of the so called neo-liberal transformation of the world into a planetary village, the blurring of nation states, and the pervasiveness of easy access to information.

##### **Required Readings:**

Diome, F. (2006). *The Belly of the Atlantic*. London: Serpent's Tail.

##### **Recommended Readings:**

Film, Yoole, Moussa Sène Absa.

#### **Session 2: Globalization, the Idea of Africa, and the Image of the World**

This session explores the effects of globalization on the development of Senegalese culture with a particular attention to the role of technologies and new media. We will look at the historical and contemporary contexts for understanding the relations among circuits of production and consumption, population movements and social inequalities, collective identities and local particularities, etc.

##### **Required Readings:**

Diome, F. (2006). *The Belly of the Atlantic*. London: Serpent's Tail.

##### **Recommended Readings:**

Chafer, T. (2003). France and Senegal: The End of the Affair? *SAIS Review*, 23(2), 155–167.

Gemmeke, A. (2011). Enchantment, migration and media: Marabouts in Senegal and in the Netherlands. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 14(6), 685–704.

Madichie, N. O. (2011). Marketing Senegal through hip-hop - a discourse analysis of Akon's music and lyrics. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 4(2), 169–197.

Appert, C. M. (2016, May). Locating hip hop origins: popular music and tradition in Senegal. *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute*, 86(2), 237-262.

### **Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

#### **Weekly response papers:**

Students must submit, biweekly, a two page double-space response paper to the readings, class discussions, and site visits.

#### **Midterm and final papers:**

In addition to the weekly response papers a five page double-space midterm paper and a five page double-space final paper will be assigned. The topics of these assignments will be shared at least two weeks before their due dates. The final paper must be presented to the entire class during the final week of the program.

### **Participation**

Students are expected to participate frequently in class, give insightful and constructive comments and listen attentively when others present their materials.

### **Assessment:**

Response paper on site visits 30%

Midterm Paper 25%

Final Paper 30%

Participation 15 %

### **Grading Scale:**

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64%	F

### **Expectations and Policies**

- Come to class prepared. Be on time. Have your readings completed and be ready to engage your peers and the material.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done according to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer.
- Comply with academic integrity policies.
- Respect differences of opinion.

**Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sit.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@sit.edu) for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.